GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:349
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2004
ADULTERATION IN FOOD ITEMS/MEDICINES
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that most of the brands of desi ghee available in market are adulterated; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to check adulteration of food items and medicines?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a)&(b): As per the information made available by the Food(Health) Authorities of the States/Union Territories, the percentage of adulteration found in samples under the category of Ghee, Butter, Ice-Cream and other Milk products during the calender years 1999 to 2001 are as under:

Year	Percentage of Adulteraton
1999	18.08
2000	19.36
2001	16.57

The provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and Rules made thereunder are implemented by the Food (Health) Authorities of the States/Union Territories through their enforcement staff, who draw random samples of various articles of food, including Ghee. Appropriate action is taken against the offenders under the provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954. The Food (Health) Authorities of the States/ U.T's are advised from time to time to keep a strict vigil on the quality of food articles, including 'Ghee' sold in the market.

Under the provisions of Drugs &Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder, the responsibility for regulating manufacture and sale of drugs including monitoring their quality is vested with the State Governments. The State Governments are advised from time to time to gear up their enforcement machinery to detect and unearth spurious/fake drugs moving in the inter-state commerce as well as to provide and strengthen their regulatory infrastructure; to establish their own State level testing labs. to ensure speedy analysis of drug samples for which they are provided assistance to strengthen and augment infrastructure facilities in state labs. The State Governments have also been advised to keep strict surveillance over the suspected dealers; collect survey samples under NSQD programme; constitute/reactivate stake drug advisory committees in which various trade and industry association as well as consumer associations can file representations; establish separate intelligence-cum-legal cell; develop efficient communication facilities and recall procedures; engage experienced counsel for fighting spurious drug cases etc.

Since manufacture and sale of spurious medicines is mainly a clandestine activity indulged in by anti-social persons, steps are taken from time to time by enforcement authorities of the States to detect and unearth spurious drugs in the inter-state commerce. The Government of India has taken the following initiatives to tackle the problem of spurious drugs:-

i) Detailed guidelines in respect of strategies required to be adopted for efficient surveillance over the movement of spurious drugs were communicated to State Government in November, 1999 to ensure focused surveillance over manufacture and sale of spurious drugs.

ii) Issues concerning alleged sale of spurious drugs was taken up by Union Health Minister with State Health Ministers in the 7th Conference of Central Council of Health (CCH) & FW held on 12 − 13 July, 2001. CCH resolved that in order to address issues relating to the increasing reports of spurious drugs/counterfeit drugs, special attention required to be given to monitor and unearth such illegal activities by constituting a separate intelligence-cum-legal cell in the respective drug control organizations and in seeking

cooperation of the pharma industry, trade as well as the police.

iii) Department of Health, Government of India constituted a broad based Committee under the Chairmanship of DGHS in July, 2001 to examine issues concerning the problem of spurious drugs. The observations and recommendations of this Committee have been circulated on September 16, 2002 to all State Drugs Controllers for their information and necessary action in the matter.

iv) Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare had specifically written to all Chief Ministers on October 8, 2002 on the issue of spurious drugs, seeking their personal intervention to ensure that adequate measures are taken in each State to vigorously pursue the strategies needed to preclude any possibility of menace of spurious products so as to collectively ensure its total eradication.

v) A meeting of Health Ministers and Senior Officials of 13 major States of the country was convened by Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare on 12.11.2002 to ensure concerted action to check any possible movement of spurious drugs in the country and to involve all stake holders to fight this menace. Suggestions/views which emerged out of discussion were forwarded on January 8, 2003 to all the State Governments for their information and necessary action. One of the outcome of the said discussion, was enactment of " The Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 (PASA)" by the State Governments for deterrent action against offenders.

vi) In order to increase the number of drug samples tested in the country and to bring down the reporting time to less than month as against 3 to 6 months presently being taken by many laboratories, a comprehensive plan has been undertaken by Central Government. under a capacity building project through World Bank assistance.

vii) In order to ensure speedy information exchange and networking of all States and Central Drugs Control Offices and Laboratories, computerization project has been undertaken by Central Government.

viii) A specialized training programme for drugs control officers of all State Governments responsible for keeping surveillance over possible movement of spurious drugs has been formulated and was conducted from 24-27 June, 2003 by Central Government in cooperation with FDA, Maharashtra at Mumbai. 26 drugs control officers from different States had attended the training programme at FDA, Mumbai on investigational skills.

ix) Government of India set up an expert committee on January 27, 2003 under the Chairmanship of Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, DG, CSIR and Secretary to Government of India to look into the various issues related to Drugs Control Administration as well as to estimate the extent of the problem of spurious drugs and to recommend measures to deal with this problem effectively. On the basis of the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee, a Drugs and Cosmetics (Amendment) Bill, 2003 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22nd December, 2003 for amending the penal provisions in the Act in order to make them more stringent.